

ABSTRACT

~~The disclosed invention provides an electronic market~~ Disclosed are electronic markets and related methods particularly useful for negotiating the exchange of transportation services between shippers or carriers and shipping customers. Embodiments include an electronic catalog-type listing of carrier services and ~~related~~ rates such that buyers can purchase services at ~~periodically~~ listed prices, and an electronic auction exchange whereby buyers can bid on the available capacity of carriers or whereby carriers can bid on shipping orders requested by customers. ~~In preferred embodiments, carriers~~ Carriers and shipping customers preferably can take into account pre-existing business relationships by designating other carriers and/or customers as preferred business partners or customers. Participation in auctions or qualification for discounted catalog rates can be limited only to those preferred partners or customers. ~~In a second embodiment, the~~ The electronic market optionally additionally enables the automatic tendering of shipment requests to carriers and automates the monitoring of acceptances from those carriers. ~~A preferred version of the~~ The second embodiment can also optionally enable ~~employs electronic tracking and tracing of shipments, provides subscription based notifications, and enables~~ integration with accounts payable and receivable systems.